



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs  
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### Accelerating Access to Care March 2015

*The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has accelerated access to care for Veterans across the country, both in VA facilities and in their communities.*

Nationally, VA has completed more than 37 million appointments between May 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. This represents an increase of 1.8 million more appointments than were completed during the same time period in 2013.

Facilities across the country have held **extended clinic hours** in the evenings and on weekends.

- From June 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014, VA completed over 880,000 appointments during extended hours clinics operated during evenings and on weekends.

VA medical centers are able to authorize **non-VA medical care** for Veterans to reduce wait times and offer care to Veterans in their communities.

- VA made over 2 million authorizations for Veterans to receive care in the private sector from May 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015. This represents a 45% increase in authorizations, when compared to the same period in the previous years.

VA has **cut wait times** in order to complete appointments in a timely manner

- As of February 1, 2015, VA completed 94% of appointments within 30 days of the veterans' preferred date, or the date determined to be medically necessary by a physician.
- Between May 15, 2014, and January 31, 2015, the Electronic Wait List went from over 57,000 appointments to 25,800, a 55% reduction.

VA has **increased recruiting and hiring** across the country

- From April 1, 2014, to December 31, 2014, VHA hired 28,378 employees with a net increase of 8,371 employees.
- The net increase in employees includes 836 new physicians, 1,856 nurses and 1,266 medical support assistants.

VA has **increased transparency** related to access to care

- At the direction of then Acting Secretary Gibson, starting in July 2014, VA has posted regular updates to the patient access data at: <http://www.va.gov/health/access-audit.asp>. These data updates enhanced transparency and provided information to Veterans and the public on Veterans access to quality health care.

**Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) Access Improvements:**

- Between May 1, 2014, and January 31, 2015, over 30,000 authorizations for non-VA care were provided to Veterans enrolled at PVAHCS, an 80% increase in the number of authorizations over the same time period one year earlier.
- From May 1, 2014, to January 31, 2015, PVAHCS completed more than 476,000 Veteran appointments, a 19 percent increase in the number of completed appointments over the same time period in the previous year.